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RS-70 file

U.S. Estimates Reduce Soviet A-Capability

WASHINGTON (UPI) — U.S. intelligence estimates of Russia's missile capability have been very substantially reduced, Defense Secretary McNamara said in congressional testimony made public Sunday.

The secretary's comments, which added a new chapter to the old controversy about missile gaps, were made in January before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

McNamara did not say how many intercontinental missiles Russia has ready for firing. But his statement lent support to speculation that the Soviets may have as few as 30 to 75 ICBMs ready for launch.

U.S. Has 34 Atlas ICBMs

The United States now has 34 Atlas ICBMs on launch pads and will have nine Titans ready next month. It also has 96 shorter range Polaris missiles on subs at sea.

McNamara said critics who complained of the "missile gap" in 1960 and in the election campaign did so "in good faith." Those critics included President Kennedy.

The secretary's comments were prompted by questioning by another such critic, Sen. Symington (D-Mo.), who made clear in a series of questions that he thought

the so-called missile gap was both created and eliminated by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Estimate Cut 95.5%

Symington said the estimate of Russia's ICBM strength has been reduced 95.5% since the 1958-59 period.

Without endorsing the Senator's statistics, McNamara said that "the national intelligence estimates have been revised downward, as you have indicated, and the revisions downward have been very substantial."

In a later discussion with Gen. Frederic H. Smith Jr., Air Force vice chief of staff, Symington said the CIA-coordinated national intelligence estimates also trimmed 81% in four years from the original appraisal of Soviet bomber production.

In his discussion with McNamara, Symington complained about basing national intelligence estimates on Kremlin intent rather than

Russian capacity.

In a speech during the missile-gap furor Allen W. Dulles, then director of Central Intelligence, said initial weapons system estimates, based on potential could be revised and updated as information becomes available on what is actually being done.

Annual Military Review

The testimony, providing the committee's annual review of the nation's military posture, also dealt with these subjects:

Viet-Nam — Possibilities are "very good" for preventing a Communist take-over in South Viet-Nam, McNamara said, but the operation "is likely to be long and difficult." Gen. George H. Decker, Army Chief of Staff, said U.S. troops there "are

not involved in shooting at the enemy as such," but called it "quite possible that some of our own people will be killed and wounded."

RS-70 — Air Force Secretary Zuckert testified the Air Force has not changed its views on expediting the supersonic RS-70 strike plane. The testimony was delivered before President Kennedy agreed to a review of the RS-70 program, averting a showdown fight with the House Armed Services Committee.

McNamara and Air Force witnesses said they hope a proposed new medium range ballistic missile will be "more accurate than Polaris and much cheaper."

Dependents — McNamara said the Defense Department, unwilling to increase the drain on U.S. dollars by resuming the shipment of military dependents to Europe, is "studying ways of shortening the tours in order to permit the troops to move without dependents."